



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HRSNA recognizes Sailors of the Year

By MC1 (SW/AW) Phil Beaufort

NORFOLK, Va. – The Hampton Roads Chapter of the Surface Navy Association (HRSNA) recognized local Civilian Mariners, U.S. Navy, and Coast Guard Sailors of the Year (SOY) at Naval Station Norfolk, March 20.

The HRSNA honored both shore and sea command senior and junior SOYs, and presented the awards during a luncheon at the Vista Point Conferencing Center.

Retired Vice Adm. Hank Giffin, USN East Coast SNA vice president, spoke to the SOYs about what being recognized means to their future.

“When you go back to your commands, your shipmates and your leaders are going to look at you differently. They are going to expect more from you, and they’ll look to you to set the example,” he said. “But it won’t stop at just your current command. When you check into your next command and the CO sees that you are a Sailor of the year, he or she is also going to be looking at you to lead and take care of the Sailors entrusted to you.”

U.S. Navy Surface Forces Atlantic (SURFLANT), Force Master Chief James Williams said the luncheon was a chance for these young Sailors to be publicly recognized for their accomplishments and to see how seriously Navy leadership takes the SOY program.

“Most these Sailors think they know that being selected Sailor of the Year is a big deal, but I don’t think they really realize how seriously senior leadership views the program,” said Williams.

“Bringing them all here, outside of their command, and giving them the chance to mingle with a lot of high ranking officers and senior enlisted to be publicly honored really drives that point home.”

Hospitalman Timothy Sierra, Bluejacket of the Year for USS Normandy (CG 60) was a case in point. He said he was honored to be in attendance and reenergized about the future.

“It’s really nice to be recognized for all my hard work by these officers and master chiefs,” said Sierra. “It’s really motivating me to work toward junior and senior Sailor of the year.”

HRSNA Vice President for senior enlisted, Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Patrick Modglin, said he is amazed at the quality of the Sailors the services are producing.

“I get excited every year when we recognize our Sailors, Coast Guardsmen and civilian mariners for a job well done,” said Modglin. “Even though our sea services keep getting smaller, it seems the caliber of our Sailors proportionally expands to meet the challenge. I couldn’t be prouder.”

Giffin said this event is one of his favorites of the year.

“When I was commander of SURFLANT (1997 to 2000), I loved the Sailor of the Year competitions. I got to meet so many amazing Sailors and the competition was intense,” said Giffin. “We used to say that making Sailor of the Year was harder than admiral. I think it is.”

SNA was incorporated in 1985 to promote greater coordination and communication among those in the military, business and academic communities who share a common interest in Naval Surface Warfare.